



WORLD JOURNAL FOR SAND THERAPY PRACTICE

PROMOTING THE ETHICAL PRACTICE OF SAND THERAPY

Editor's Commentary

Special Issue:

Honoring Steve Armstrong: Humanistic Sandtray Therapy

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Steve Armstrong (1952 – 2022) was a counselor, professor, author, colleague, and friend to many around the world. He died a year ago, July 8, 2022. His groundbreaking work, Humanistic Sandtray Therapy (HST), further established by his book *Sandtray Therapy, A Humanistic Approach* (2008), made him a key figure and leader in the sand therapy world.



Dr. Armstrong provided sand therapy training internationally, wrote numerous professional articles on sandtray therapy, and guided significant research in group sandtray therapy (Shen, 2006; Shen & Armstrong, 2008). He additionally developed a certification program in HST through his Sandtray Therapy Institute. Steve joined the Editorial Review Board of this journal upon its inception. He also served as the Editor of the *International Journal of Play Therapy*.

Dr. Armstrong received his doctorate at the University of North Texas and joined the faculty of Texas A&M University-Commerce in 2002. He will be missed by all the program graduates, his colleagues there and throughout Texas, and those

he served in his private practice.

I was honored to know Steve as a friend and colleague. I remember long conversations about play therapy and sand therapy issues and life in general – professionally and personally. His depth of knowledge and wisdom was always welcome. His sense of humor, delightful! I co-presented

with him at the International Play Therapy Conference in Houston, TX, in 2014. We did a live Humanistic Sandtray Therapy session – and I was thrilled to be the client! What a powerful experience!

In this issue, we focus on his work in his honor. His book is reviewed by Dr. Pedro Blanco, a friend and colleague. The lead article, *Humanistic Sandtray Therapy: Theoretical Underpinnings and Practical Applications*, is by Dr. Ryan Foster. Dr. Foster was also a close colleague of Steve's, frequently teaching with him on HST and providing leadership in Steve's Institute. Steve passed the mantle of continuing this work to Ryan. We in the sand therapy field are grateful for this, as Steve's legacy will continue and expand under Ryan's leadership.

Finally, it seems fitting that this month's *Focus on Miniature* feature is GEMS: Indeed, Steve Armstrong remains an enduring, abiding, and sparkling gem for us all.

References:

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